

The Primal Blueprint Podcast – Episode #30: Primal Thrills: An Excerpt From Award Winning Book, *The Primal Connection*

Topic timestamps:

Playful spirit: 02:07

Primal Thrills Essay (from Primal Connection): 05:01

Safety issues: 29:38

Develop intuitive sense: 31:38

Be creative: 32:57

Brad Kearns: Hey, we are back with another Primal Blueprint podcast from the Malibu Studios with Mark Sisson. Thanks for coming in, Mark.

Mark: Easy commute. What can I say?

Brad: I am happy to say that we had some great feedback on your first attempt on your essay style podcast where you read about chronic cardio so I thought we'd tee up another one.

Mark: Yeah. What do you have in mind?

Brad: Well, the wonderful Primal Connection and a nice excerpt that you picked out. You have a few, actually, but I thought your favorite one would be on the slate for today.

Mark: One of the things that I find a little disappointing is that not as many people bought the Primal Connection. It is a great book. It won three awards from various organizations. I kind of get it. Once people have read the Primal Blueprint, they get the diet dialed in. They get the exercise thing dialed in. Then sort of understand the basic premise of the primal lifestyle. The idea behind Primal Connection was to go a little bit deeper and to look into areas that weren't so obvious: playing in the dirt, really getting your sleep and your sun exposure figured out. One of those aspects had to do with primal play which sort of became my favorite topic in 2013 and going into this. How can I get more excitement out of life by incorporating more play into my life?

Brad: Yeah. [00:02:07] Play is also a hot topic in the original Primal Blueprint but in the Primal Connection you talk about playful spirit beyond just saying, "I played Frisbee on the weekend." It is cultivating this playful spirit and in the process developing a "cognitively fluid mind" which is so important. (That is a quote from Stuart Brown, the world's leading expert and author on the concept of play.)

Mark: It is overlooked so much in our lives. You get so deeply imbedded in the family cycle, the work cycle, you know...just the routine of life that we sort of overlook play. We think that play is a luxury when, in fact, early ages on our brains are plastic. They are ready to be molded and shaped by experiences and play, throughout all of human history, play was a vital part of that plasticity of the brain of getting it to the point whether it was problems solving or whether it was social cooperation or even figuring out your place in the hierarchy of the tribe or the family unit. These were all aspects of play made play kind of workshop for the brain and becoming a better human organism.

Brad: Right. Also when you are playing, you are pondering and processing the 'what if' scenarios, without the life or death penalty in terms of our ancestors. Not today, of course, but it allows for the development of the cognitively fluid mind and that problem solving without actually being chased by a lion. You are being chased by one of your friends and climbing up a rock and seeing where your limits are and so forth. What is interesting as the anthropologists observed one of the dramatic spikes in human longevity was the cultivation of grains in civilization. But around 30,000 years ago they saw another spike in the population

growth and one of the main attributes was the ability to have that free time, leisure time to enhance their cognitive function.

Mark: Exactly. So without further ado, why don't we get into this essay and see what these listeners think.

Brad: What is cool also is that in July we had a special promo on Amazon Kindle and this thing actually skyrocketed up the charts, and where did it hit as the high?

Mark: I think number 4 overall world-wide all books on Kindle.

Brad: So hit number 4 on health there was a special promotion for the price a buck for and now it is back to its normal price of \$9.99. The great thing is I think it is still a bargain at \$9.99 for the digital version. The hard copy is more. But you can go on line there and, I did this last Christmas, where you can actually order the book and spit it out to five or ten friends of family just by typing their emails in and they receive in their email saying, "Hey, click here and you have this nice book."

Mark: Right. That is a great idea. I would encourage people to do that then.

Brad: [00:05:01] So the excerpt that you picked out is called Primal Thrills and it is near the end of the final chapter in the Primal Connection. Thanks for reading it today. Primal Thrills with Mark Sisson.

Mark: Here we go:

How could life for a hunter-gatherer be anything but an adventure? Just as our ancestors ventured to the edge once in a while, our genes expect the same from us. That's right, every once in a while, we need to do something that pushes our limits and expands our boundaries. The urge is as natural as it is stirring. I'm talking about an occasional adrenaline rush to refresh and reset your cognitive and emotional compasses. The sort that suspends you in the heady risk of action, where time seems to stop, or at least slows down considerably. I'm talking about the kind of thing where you are fully engaged in the moment and become raw awareness, where the heightening of the senses can feel like skating along a razor edge that separates focus from fear.

There is indeed a certain thrill in testing our nerves, pondering how much farther down a darkening forest path we'll go until fear or practical thoughts win out. Extreme physical endeavors—like freestyle skiing, mountain biking, climbing, surfing, white-water rafting, and so on—do the same. Such activities depend on sensory acuteness. Obviously, I wouldn't recommend doing them without proper instruction, guided practice, and setting sensible limits. But in gaining mastery of these "sports," we feel out and fine-tune our perceptiveness. We learn to trust our gut, Habit #6. A matter of a couple degrees in one's lean on a steep hill can spell disaster for a skier. The angle and height of rifts in a white-water scene tell a kayaker how to navigate. A climber learns the subtle difference between the feel of a foothold that is steady and one that is compromised or too shallow.

In this way, extreme endeavors and other spontaneous, inspired physical activities take us out of the rational and plant us wholly in the sensory. Extreme athletes, as suggested by Diane Ackerman, noted naturalist and author of *Natural History of the Senses*, reference a sense of "cleansing" and "divestiture" when explaining what draws them to their passions. They enter that precipice between actual danger and exuberant experimentation, tempting fate to relish the thrill of the chase, holding back just enough that they can withdraw in time to save their skins.

So much of life these days is routinized, regimented, parceled out for maximum efficiency and order. We spend much of our lives on a comfortable, safe plateau: such is the opportunity modern life affords. Few of us face any real hazard in a day. Few of us experience shocks to the system, those fleeting moments of hormesis, and are confronted by our own mortality in material, appreciable ways, or with any regularity. For the most part, it's a profound benefit and historical boon to live in an age of unmatched certainty compared to that of our distant and not-so-distant ancestors. Yet, something in us feels the incongruity. We evolved facing threat. All those eons and thousands of generations molded our bodies and minds for acute risk and corresponding resilience. It's unnatural to live without it. Something in our genetic capacity

languishes. Something in our inherent nature withers or, alternatively, rebels. We become bored, overtaken by a sense of detached fatigue and inexplicable ennui.

In response, we fabricate risk with meaningless social drama or do genuinely dangerous, irresponsible, and stupid things that offer nothing to our health or self-actualization. Or we quietly, unconsciously acquiesce. There's a price for this resignation, I think. As Ackerman puts it, "Where there is no risk, the emotional terrain is flat and unyielding, and, despite all its dimensions, valleys, pinnacles, and detours, life will seem to have none of its magnificent geography, only a length."

In the end, risk, as irrational as it is, is intuitive. Without it, we live stuck, inert, fixed at center. We give up the chance to explore the wild peripheries of living—and the reinvigoration that adventure offers even when we come back to the base of everyday life. When you honor these impulses, you return to ordinary life refreshed and deeply appreciative of your secure surroundings, a warm shower, a nourishing meal, a group of friends to regale with your tales of adventure. We are indeed a species that thrives in dichotomy. Risk doesn't have to be physical, of course, and I'm not suggesting you deliberately insert yourself in dangerous situations. I believe, however, that we benefit from activities that propel us to heightened mental and physical states, in which we further develop our often half-used senses and give ourselves over to a more primitive but powerful source of focus.

Consider the sixteenth century's Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and his forty-three-thousand-mile journey to circumnavigate the globe. In search of a western route to the Spice Islands from Europe, he sailed down the South American coast—south, south, south into stormy seas and an increasingly brutal winter, with absolutely no idea where the southern tip was, or how long it would take to get there. Once around the continent, he fully expected to encounter the Spice Islands (near modern-day Indonesia) in short order, only to deal with an additional three months of sailing the endless (endless in the most profound sense of the word) waters of the Pacific.

Sitting here today, with Google Earth at our fingertips, it's almost impossible to comprehend such a mysterious, treacherous, perspective-altering journey. Closer to home, I can recall with great detail the looks on my kids' faces on the occasions of their first bike ride, first sleepover camp, and first time taking the car out solo. Certainly you have cherished memories of facing challenges, uncertainty, or even danger, and the resulting sense of personal accomplishment. Heck, I've failed numerous challenges, but grew from the experience of having tried.

Like Magellan, we still possess our factory wiring for adventure—a continual desire to explore the limits of our physical and mental capabilities and our world in general.

What we are going for here is *calculated* risk. We access this through the physical realm because the intensity and graphic nature of physical challenges build confidence and bravery, virtues that can be applied to the other connections suggested in this book and life as a whole. Clearly, such risks are subjective, and you alone preside over your definition of what constitutes a calculated risk. A close friend of mine defines it as BASE jumping off El Capitan, Yosemite's nearly three-thousand-foot-tall granite monolith. We've hiked the trail to the top together, but I can't even bring myself to get close enough to the edge to watch his performance! Conversely, if you're the type to test the limits of your motorcycle skills by revving up to 120 mph on the interstate at midnight, you may need to question if you are distorting this primal urge for adventure.

Pushing the envelope demands that you access the flow state. To reiterate the disclaimer, there is no need to put your life in danger to access this state of mind. Psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (CHECK-SENT-ME-HIGH) asserts that your challenges must sync with your abilities. Something too easy will bore you, but something too difficult, too dangerous, and too far outside of your comfort zone will likely cause you to disengage and become consumed by fear or frustration.

I can sense very well where the limitations of my snowboarding abilities lie, and I always stay well clear of crossing that line into the danger zone. I accept the calculated risks of sliding down a mountain slope, do my very best to mitigate these inherent risks by staying totally focused and cognizant of my limits. I believe

strongly that the vast majority of “accidents”—not only in extreme sports but also in all physical activities—result from stupid mistakes rather than a natural consequence of the inherent risk. Often, the stupid mistake involved is the initial decision to attempt an endeavor with excessive risk. I respect and marvel at big-wave surfers, extreme skiers, and mountaineers, but I reject exceeding the limits of skill and common sense in the name of accomplishment.

A skydiving friend of mine related a serious accident where he sustained numerous broken bones and damaged organs, but lived to tell about it. The cause was a malfunctioning parachute that opened only partially due to improper packing. He typically paid an attendant at the skydiving center twenty bucks to pack his chutes. He was saving time so he could take more jumps! Upon returning to the sport, he decided to assume that job himself.

Whatever your parameters are, it’s essential to assess the risk-versus-reward factor carefully and harness all the concentration you can muster—not only to achieve the exalted flow, but to be safe. The goal is to proceed accordingly through exciting physical challenges, experience the thrill of being in the zone or the flow, increase your competency at your favorite activities, and broaden your horizons to pursue exciting new challenges in the future.

As you pursue Primal Thrills in the adrenaline-rush category, a certain element of physical risk and danger may be involved. But the same holds true anytime you zone out in daily life. In fact, when you access the flow state and test your boundaries, you invariably improve your ability to focus, heighten your awareness of risk and danger, and access an elevated mental and physical state where your attention becomes primal instead of scattered.

If you’ve walked by the pickup basketball game in the park every day at lunch but never summoned the guts to play, jump in there one time and see if you can hang. Hey, you might get embarrassed, but you can hold your head higher than that guy who walks by every day and never takes his shot. Did you high jump, throw the shot, or pole vault “back in the day”? See if you can reawaken old passions like these through a local community sports program.

If you already have a certain level of devotion to serious physical challenges, see if you can take things to the next level. In *Bone Games: Extreme Sports, Shamanism, Zen, and the Search for Transcendence*, author Rob Schultheis discusses how being pushed to the edge of his physical limits allowed him to access a higher level of consciousness and peak performance. He relates accessing the flow or the zone during a perilous mountain climbing experience. Having suffered significant injuries in a fall, he was stuck in the wilderness with a dangerous storm approaching. Inspired at a primal level by his dire circumstances, he proceeded to descend a treacherous mountain pass with uncanny speed and mastery. In Schultheis’s words: Something happened on that descent, something I have tried to figure out ever since, so inexplicable and powerful it was. I found myself very simply doing impossible things: dozens, scores of them, as I climbed down Neva’s lethal slopes. Shattered, in shock, I climbed with the impeccable sureness of a snow leopard, a mountain goat.

When Schultheis healed his body and returned to the scene of his adventure later, he could scarcely believe what he had accomplished and the danger level that he’d barely blinked at. To follow are a few more suggestions for Primal Thrills, but I want to emphasize imagination and creativity on this connection. There are plenty of ways to push your boundaries in your everyday life, maybe volunteer to do some public speaking or ask for that much-deserved raise. But overall I want you to think about outdoor, natural settings, minimal logistics, and pursuing the purity of the experience. See if you can call up a healthy bit of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty of outcome—within reason of course—in order to access a higher level of consciousness and peak performance.

Amusement parks. Challenging the laws of gravity is a surefire way to get a safe rush. Granted, the long lines and cotton candy stands might not be as badass as Schultheis scrambling down a dangerous slope during a lightning storm, or modern-day Magellans racing in the Vendée Globe. However, the waterslides, the roller coasters, and the ever-more sophisticated and gasp-inducing contraptions rising from your nearest

amusement park are a harmless way to get crazy and extreme. What's more, your genes don't know the difference between a life-or-death adrenaline rush and a simulated one at the amusement park.

Night hike. Join a local recreation group that offers organized night hikes or snowshoe outings. Expect some sweaty palms, an elevated heart rate, and jittery nerves as you enter into the unfamiliar world of darkness. As you proceed with your adventure, a sense of focus and peace will edge out your initial fears. In a short while, your hardwired instinct and sensory acuity will take over and you'll realize you're somehow able to balance your body deftly along a dark, rocky trail. You'll hear every small sound and identify the exact source. As other long-buried, primal abilities present themselves, you'll gain courage and confidence that is hard to acquire via the quarterly sales contest or adult softball league playoffs.

Competition. Anything that gets your competitive juices flowing will facilitate a flow experience. Join that pickup basketball game, organize a neighborhood Ping-Pong tournament, or pull the trigger and enter a mud run, beach volleyball tournament, or mini triathlon.

Jump off something. Jumping from an elevated perch into water could be the quintessential Primal Thrill. Find a river, lake, or ocean with rocky shorelines and a suitable perch from which to launch. Failing these options, go for the high-diving board at a local swimming pool. Caution and good sense are advised here. First, if you haven't seen anyone else jump from the spot, you're taking a risk! Second, I go feet-first when jumping into any body of water besides a swimming pool. If the water is not crystal clear, I first dive down and thoroughly examine the landing area to ensure it's of a safe depth and there are no debris or protruding objects beneath the surface.

While it's hard to do damage jumping from 10 feet or less, anything over that height requires correct form to prevent injury. For example, even something as innocuous as hitting the surface with your arms outstretched can tear a rotator cuff when you are a couple stories high and beyond. Also, it's a great idea to wear Vibrams or sneakers to protect your bare feet from impact trauma.

Martial arts. This affords mind/body benefits along with all-around physical conditioning. Breaking bricks—what a great metaphor for becoming a more powerful and confident person!

Mini adventure race. Choose three or more modes of transportation and establish a challenge to go from point A to point B using various forms of locomotion (human-powered only). For example, take a bike ride to the lake, swim to the opposite shore, hike the perimeter to return to your bike, and then ride back home. Throw in a skateboard, scooter, or—if you have winter conditions—snowshoes, cross-country skis, and ice skates. City-dwellers can try this: hike two blocks to a building with twenty-plus stories and accessible stairs. Climb and descend the staircase, then hike another two blocks to a new building and repeat.

Nature challenges. Mountain climbing, rock climbing, water sports (swimming, surfing, standup paddling, waterskiing, wakeboarding, wakesurfing), and winter sports (downhill and cross-country skiing, ice skating) all entail synchronizing your physical efforts with natural forces—going with the flow. You haven't lived until you have tried standup paddling or wake surfing (yep, sans rope behind a ski boat). Moving within a naturally varied environment like water virtually demands that you transition out of an analytical state into a flow-like state.

Photo scavenger hunt. A game director is required to administrate this game. Form several teams (the more, the better!) of two or three people. Arm each team with a digital camera. The game director prepares a list of items to photograph, with corresponding point values for degree of difficulty. On the photo list, describe points of interest in your area, riddles that reveal a specific location, and outrageous, difficult-to-orchestrate situations (for instance, a photo of a team member getting shampooed at a hair salon; eating watermelon with a stranger on a bus bench; sitting astride a Harley Davidson motorcycle; with a non-domesticated animal visible in the picture; or submerged in a pool holding a bag of potato chips). Begin by distributing the photo lists to the teams, start the clock, and establish a return time of two to three hours. Upon return, each team's photos are evaluated, points tabulated, and a winner declared. Printing out the photos onto a collage for each team makes for a great souvenir!

Slacklining. It's such a simple endeavor, but one of powerful symbolism. A slackline is a flat nylon tightrope a couple inches wide that you suspend from two anchor points, such as trees, or strong posts or poles. As the name suggests, the line is not taut under the user's weight; rather it will stretch and recoil under the load. It looks easy, but it's a tremendous challenge to simply mount the line and keep your footing. The dynamic tension in the line can send you flying off with the slightest disturbance to your center of gravity.

Slacklining is an activity that engrosses you immediately. An approach that's too casual will send you flying off the rope; try too hard and you might soon find your legs doing the dreaded sewing machine (uncontrollable twitching). But when you can get into the sweet spot of balance and start taking steps up and down the line, it's a blissful, connected feeling. Search YouTube for "Slackline World Cup" and you'll see the amazing exploits of "trickliners" who use the line like a trampoline, launching to perform aerial tricks and then landing gracefully back on the skinny line.

Speed golf. Wait until twilight and tee off on an empty course. Carry a junior golf bag with just a handful of clubs. Jog from shot to shot and play quickly, but at the same time making your best effort to score well, including putting. Count one point for each stroke and each minute on the course to produce a total score. Top Speed Golf professionals can shoot in the 70s and finish an entire 18-hole regulation course in around 40 minutes!

Ultimate Frisbee. If you haven't tried it, you are missing out on one of the most enjoyable games around! All ages and ability levels can play safely together, with minimal equipment or logistics, in groups of varied numbers. I recommend a minimum of six players and a maximum of sixteen. Depending on the size of the group, a field of 50 to 100 yards length and 35 to 50 yards width is ideal. The game (the proper term is simply "Ultimate," since Frisbee is actually a brand name) is somewhat like soccer with a flying disc. Teams try to score a goal by covering the length of the field passing the disc and crossing the end line. You can pass forward or backward to any open teammate, but cannot run if you are the passer. If a team on offense drops the disc, the other team takes possession on the spot immediately and tries to pass to open players and get across the opposite end line—it's nonstop action! Players should match up with opponents appropriately by size and ability, covering players from the opposing team in man-to-man defense style. However, no physical contact with an opponent is allowed except incidental contact going for the flying disc. These rules allow for the full and safe inclusion of a diverse group.

Now here's an exercise you might like to try to help you expand your comfort zone.....

Get an oversized piece of paper—an artist's sketch pad, butcher paper, whatever ... it doesn't have to be fancy. Draw a large circle in the middle of the paper. Inside, title the circle "Comfort Zone." Write the names of fifteen skills that are currently inside your comfort zone—an arbitrary boundary that your mind has created, inside of which you feel safe, confident, relaxed, and risk-free. Can you run three miles comfortably? Rattle off twenty-five pushups? Program computer software? Sell real estate? Write screenplays? Write your particulars down in the circle if they are routine for you. Then think about related endeavors that are outside your comfort zone that you wish to achieve—run six miles, do fifty pushups in one effort, or perhaps actually sell your screenplay. Write down these ideas outside of the circle.

That was the warm-up stuff; now go beyond fitness and professional skills into matters of personal conduct, career, and relationships. Have you been getting vibes from the guy at the coffee house, but hesitant to ask him out? Write it down outside the circle. Do you comfortably communicate with your teenager about intimate personal matters, or do you wish things could be more open on that front? Keep going with anything that comes to mind. Refer to the Primal Thrills suggestions, as well as the summaries of the previous sections of the book, and write down some important connections you would like to make that are outside your comfort zone. These don't all have to be quantifiable; you could write about being more patient, taking criticism better, or improving your listening skills. Don't worry, you don't have to display the completed worksheet on your front door; this is a private exercise to get you in touch with some personal growth opportunities.

Now, circle five of the most important things lying outside of your comfort zone that you would like to

bring inside your comfort zone immediately. Have that difficult talk with your boss or loved one; achieve an ambitious fitness goal; approach the coffee clerk; and so forth. If necessary, write some notes next to the item with specifics on how you plan to take immediate action. As you tackle each of these challenges, realize that your comfort zone grows larger and larger. Essentially, this represents your lifelong goal—to tackle new challenges continually and to expand your comfort zone by doing so!

Here's a summary of the topics discussed.

We play more than any other species, and we are one of the few that does not cease to play once we reach adulthood. Play is and has always been vital for our survival and advancement as a species. It is part of our cognitive survival set, providing opportunities to learn, process what-if scenarios, experiment, and solve problems. But in the moment, true play has no particular purpose. When you play you have no attachment to the outcome. You aren't too old or too adult to play, and you needn't treat it like a guilty pleasure when you indulge. Embrace play with all the abandon of children—throw yourself into it and don't look back. It's good for you.

Remember, discover your own brand of play. For many of us, the impulse is to gravitate toward something we enjoy and excel at. But the very nature of play is to explore, to innovate, to be creative, and to experience anew. Pick up a tool. Take a class at a home-supply center and build something. Arm yourself with a paintbrush, a camera, a chisel, a quilting needle. Learn a craft. The mind devises, but the hand itself thinks, designs, knows. Find the flow in focused craftsmanship. Explore art, music, reading. Or take a mental break at work and throw paper airplanes or doodle caricatures. Let your imagination run free.

And try to indulge in some Primal Thrills. The urge to explore the limits of our minds, bodies, and environment is as natural as it is stirring. There's a certain thrill in testing your nerves, and when you're in the heady risk of action, time stops and you become raw awareness. We are factory-wired to want to explore our limits and our world in general, and if our thirst for adventure is constantly suppressed, we become bored and develop a sense of detached fatigue. Adrenaline rushes allow you to return to ordinary life refreshed and appreciative of simple pleasures. Whatever you choose to do, do it safely, with respect for the activity and your abilities—or lack thereof—and enjoy the heightened experience of knowing you are alive.

Brad: Mark, thank you. That was interesting. I am kind of psyched up to go and pursue some Primal Thrills right now.

Mark: I am, too, as a matter of fact. Having read that, I realize I haven't followed my own advice for a while. I have to find something that is new and exciting immediately.

Brad: Well, Ultimate Frisbee was on the list and I enjoyed some Primal Thrills making my annual appearance at the famed Malibu Ultimate Frisbee game. It is a lot of fun. There was a lot of soreness involved for the next couple of days because I am not a regular player. It was thrilling until the point that you kept scoring touchdowns on me since I was assigned to guard you.

Mark: You know, we can always have a rematch.

Brad: [00:29:38] I'll recover and then think about that. Some of the important stuff you mentioned at the end about the safety factor of not misinterpreting this and going out to be a daredevil, what do you think the cutoff is? There is risk involved in everything. You had a serious injury playing Ultimate Frisbee but it is not inherently dangerous like tackle football.

Mark: I can give you an example. The injury I got in that particular game was because I made a stupid risky move. The minute I made the move, I recognized that something could go wrong. It comes back to the point I read about a little bit earlier. I think intuitively we know where that line is for each of us. We develop that. That is part of what play can give us...to know where the line is. It is that safe experimentation in play that gives us an opportunity in real life thrilling adventures to sort of know where our boundaries are and just push against them gently and not so aggressively.

Brad: That is a good point. When you talk about the cables at Half Dome which for people in California, it is an incredible hike, and last 500 feet is vertical ascent up the granite. You have to hold on to these cables. It can be dangerous but if you are an experienced hiker it is no big deal. What happens is you get the YOHAWS out there that don't play enough in daily life. They don't hike. They don't engage with nature. Those are the ones slipping and falling.

Mark: Or those are the ones holding up the group because they realize they have bitten off more than they can chew.

Brad: There was a terrible accident in Yosemite a couple of years ago where people were wading in the water 15 yards upstream from Yosemite falls and all these experienced people were yelling at them to get out but they didn't have any concept of the danger because their lives were so structured and regimented.

Mark: Yeah. That all falls under the original Primal Blueprint law of AVOID STUPID MISTAKES, I think. That's not an example, necessarily, of Primal Thrills where you are pushing the envelope of your comfort zone.

[00:31:38] But back to everything about Mark's Daily Apple and the Primal Blueprint has to do with my desire to allow people to see for themselves, to develop an intuitive sense of what is the right amount of food to eat, what kind of food to eat, what choices to make, what sort of exercises to do to become fit, to intuitively get where each person's comfort zone and boundary lies and then gently push against those boundary by exploring these opportunities that we call Primal Thrills.

Brad: Interesting that you mention that you have a lot of playful elements in your life. You do the Frisbee game. You are paddling. You do outdoor activities, but you admitted that you want to find something new and exciting and are constantly looking for challenge and variety. One of my favorite from the passage was "otherwise, if we don't do that, we fabricate risk with meaningless risk with social drama.

Mark: Yes, well a lot of people have undertaken risky behavior on Twitter or Facebook. They are fabricating some element of adrenaline rush by pushing the envelope either with social inappropriate comments or whatever. That is sort of what I meant by that.

[00:32:57] But back to the idea that there are ways in which we have to be creative in exploring the boundaries. For me, I have my Bucket List of things to do. I try to knock one or two things off the Bucket List every year. That is one of those areas that I would look to, if I am looking for new challenges. What are some of things I said I wanted to do when I was 12 or 15, and 25 and 38 that I still haven't done? I like keeping a Bucket List for that reason.

Brad: How is that learning to swim faster going?

Mark: I never had that on my Bucket List because that was one of those things I didn't think was going to be. It is certainly outside of my comfort zone but I don't think it had any merit to me in the long run. So that is not on the list.

Brad: You were giving your talk at Primalcon and most of those people are aware that you were one of the top Ironman people from the old days. You took 4th place in the Ironman World Championships when you were a professional triathlete but you also set a record that may never be broken out there.

Mark: Yes, the slowest swim time for a top-five finisher. It will never be broken, clearly. I find things that not only challenge me but interest me. I can swim. That's fine. I just don't have any desire to plunge into the water on a regular basis to work on that just for the sake of going faster. On the other hand, one of my Bucket List items is I want to play piano and sing in a lounge one night and make \$50 bucks in tips, for instance. That is the sort of comfort zone I am talking about.

Brad: That would be a \$50 bill or 50 ones. You could put them in a giant frame and put it up on the wall and don't spend it. That's a good point. The many examples that you mentioned and I really appreciate

I remember when you were working on the manuscript and I begged you to put Speed Golf in as one of the suggestions that is my favorite sport. They are so diverse. Take a class at Home Depot. Go out and stand-up paddle. It is all over the board and what it really comes down to is when you cultivate that playful spirit, anything can be playful, including throwing trash into the waste basket at work, which is what we are about to do now for our third rematch.

Mark: Are we at \$20 bucks right now?

Brad: It is \$13 that I am down. I don't want to do double or nothing. So listeners, thank you so much for joining Mark Sisson for that podcast essay. I am your host, Brad Kearns and we'll see you at the next Primal Blueprint podcast.